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Belgian Nazi Tied to U.S. Army

By The Associated Press

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The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith said yesterday in New York that a Belgian Nazi convicted of torturing American pilots and of other war crimes worked for United States Army counterintelligence for 11 years after World War II.

In a case that B'nai B'rith likened to that of Klaus Barbie, it said that the Belgian, Robert Jan Verbelen, now 72 and living in Austria since 1946, was hired by American authorities in 1946 under the name Alfred H. Schwab. It said the Army knew his true identity.

Mr. Verbelen was described as a leader of Flemish Nazis in Belgium before and during the war.

He was tried in absentia by a Belgian military court in 1947 and condemned to death for various acts, including imprisoning and torturing two American pilots, Lieuts. Nuntio Street and Eugene Dingleline. The pilots had been shot down over Belgium and eventually wound up at the Buchenwald camp, from which the Soviet Army liberated them.

Justin Finger, director of the civil rights division of B'nai B'rith, said the facts in the case were obtained from records at Fort Meade, Md., obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, from the Belgian Government and other sources.

He said it was the second recent revelation of a war criminal's being hired by American authorities.

The Justice Department has confirmed that Mr. Barbie worked for the United States after being sentenced to death as a war criminal by a French court, Mr. Finger said.

He said he wrote to Attorney General William French Smith last week asking for an inquiry into the Verbelen case.

B'nai B'rith said Mr. Verbelen now lives in Vienna, makes speeches to pro-Nazi groups and writes for right-wing publications.

It said that, after the United States Army left Austria in 1955, Mr. Verbelen became an agent for the police and acquired Austrian citizenship. He was acquitted of war crimes charges in an Austrian court in 1965, it said.